

Computer Security Specialists

Computer security specialists are the ones who look for the breaks in security and try to rectify the problem (be it a virus, worm, etc.). They also can modify or write new programs and test them on computers to see if they'll get rid of the problem. Their other task involves communicating with the staff that he/she is working with to find out what kind of security is needed. Once that is established, these specialists must train the staff on how to use computers securely so an incident does not occur in the future. They can also monitor the data use and regulate access to a network.

Every day, computer security specialists need to communicate by phone, e-mail, and in person. They almost always work indoors and have to share space with others (they work as part of a team). They have 40 hours per week schedules, but they sometimes will have to work evenings or weekends. It is possible that specialists will have to travel to different parts of a city, state, and even the nation to work with different companies. An important part of their every day schedule is being very exact in their work. Their actions are responsible for someone else's data (or even the entire company).

In order to become a computer security specialist, the first thing you need to accomplish is a bachelor's degree in either computer science or information systems. Ideally, you want to major in one and minor in the other. Because these specialists are in constant need to be updated on the new software or threats, a part-time job or an internship would help. You can also receive on-the-job training. Those that are in college or military also have this option. On-the-job training takes from 1 to 2 years (7 to 13 weeks for the military). To receive full effect, you will also be paired with an expert in computer security.

Threats are being created on a daily basis, so computer security specialists are always going to be needed, and the field will be always growing (theoretically). *In Ohio there are just about 450 openings per year, and in the United States there are 13,550 openings per year. *For the wages, in Ohio, computer security specialists receive anywhere from \$48,000-75,000 and in the United States the average is \$52,000-85,000.

*Note that the wages and employment outlook are based on the Network and Computer Systems Administration occupation, as they are considered a branch of them, and data solely for Computer Security Specialists was not collected.